

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY: Bulgaria

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The most popular residential area for Sofia's privileged classes lies in the vicinity of Doktorski Sad (Doctor's Garden). The houses and apartments in this area are all pre-World War II and therefore equipped with refinements such as private bath facilities and kitchens. In the Lozans area, which lies partly in the First and Sixth Districts, there are many new constructions which might be adapted for occupancy by "Western" diplomatic personnel. Other suitable buildings are reportedly scattered throughout the center of the city.

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practically all the building which has been accomplished in the post-war years is geared to the Bulgarian regime's concept of the standards of living of a "collectivized proletariat" and therefore not suitable for any one from "more advanced countries."

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The areas in which many well-placed communists and some diplomatic establishments maintain dachas (small country homes) are Bajana Knjashevo and Borovets. The former is eight kilometers from Sofia, while the latter is 70 kilometers away. Unless the Bulgarian government has a definite interest in the matter, it is reportedly almost impossible now to secure a dacha in one of these areas.

Areas of Interest near Sofia

At Pancharevo, which is located about 15 kilometers to the southeast of Sofia, a four-kilometer artificial lake was recently formed by the construction of a dam. This, together with the Stalin Dam which was built 15 kilometers farther to the south, is the most popular picnic area near Sofia. Borovets, which is 70 kilometers from Sofia, offers considerable in the way of outdoor life. One of the nearby mountains is 1200 meters high. In the summer surrounding woods and dachas are very popular while in the winter the main activity is skiing. During the immediate postwar years the American Legation in Sofia rented a dacha near Borovets. Not far from Borovets are the Stalin Peak (2925 meters) and Vitosha (2200 meters), two well-frequented holiday areas.

Resort Areas in Bulgaria

The most popular resort areas in Bulgaria are located on the Black Sea. Varna is the eldest and at present the most well-known.

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50,000 visitors come to Varna each year from other communist countries. In his opinion less than 1000 visitors from non-communist countries vacation at this Bulgarian resort each year. Transportation from Sofia to Varna is relatively convenient and inexpensive. Air travel costs 112 leva (a two-hour flight); the train, which takes 11 hours, costs 100 leva plus 32 leva for a sleeper for first-class accommodations and 70 leva plus 26 for second-class sleeping accommodations. An asphalt road has recently been completed between Sofia and Varna (550 km.). Over 30 first-class hotels in Varna cater to the visitors, who, because of the high rates charged, must of necessity be either Bulgarians in privileged positions or foreign visitors.

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Within the past two years two other resort areas have been built on the Black Sea - Zolotoye Peschi and Nesebur. [redacted] these areas in the near future will be more popular than Varna because the planners seem to have shown more imagination than those who have developed Varna.

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Local Transportation

Most of the transportation in Sofia is furnished by eight streetcar lines which crisscross the city. Tickets cost 0.2 leva. Autobuses connect Sofia with neighboring villages. There are only five taxi stands in Sofia (40 to 50 machines) and the taxi fares are inordinately high; they average 2.5 leva a kilometer.

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[redacted] there were not more than 1000 privately-owned automobiles in all of Bulgaria. Of these, 400 were new Moskvich automobiles delivered by the Soviet Union in June 1958. Two types of gasoline are available - the 50/60 octane gas sells for 1.5 leva a liter while the 70/80 octane type sells for 2.5 leva a liter.

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Public Buildings and Institutions in Sofia

[redacted] portrayed Sofia as a city of government buildings, monuments, trees, parks, and winding brooks. Attractive in itself but yet supporting perhaps the lowest standard of living, with the exception of Albania, in all of Europe. Public buildings include three libraries, nine hospitals (including two for children), approximately 10 public baths, roughly 20 movie theaters, a host of museums, six athletic stadiums, and various types of theaters featuring opera, dramatic plays, concerts, and musicals.

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There are over 15 hotels in Sofia. The "Balkan" and the "Bulgaria," both under the management of Balkan-Tourist, are considered the best, with the former having the decided edge over the latter. The rates per day for a room without food in the Balkan Hotel range between 40 leva a day for a single room to 100 leva a day for a suite. [redacted] that the restaurants in these two hotels were the best in Sofia. Two Russian restaurants and the dining room of the Klub Journalistov are also considered good. [redacted] that the average restaurant in Sofia is geared to Bulgarian standards and tastes and therefore is not recommended to the tourist.

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Movie films shown in Sofia are invariably saturated with communist propaganda. Soviet export films are usually exhibited because the Bulgars produce on the average only five films a year, and all of them have a high communist content. The few films from the West which are shown invariably depict the darkest side of life in the capitalistic countries.

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[redacted] sporting activities offered the average Bulgarian his only relief from the daily struggle with life in a communist system. Football is the national pastime and matches even on the local level draw sizable crowds. Other

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sporting activities which are popular include bicycling, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, boxing, track and field events, swimming, ping-pong, and chess.

Educational Institutions

Schools in Bulgaria are divided into the three levels usually found in communist-controlled countries - primary, middle, and higher educational institutions. All schools from the lowest level (kindergarten) to the universities are subject to government control.

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[] schools established and subsidized by foreign governments were abolished in the late Forties, although foreign diplomatic missions were permitted to maintain schools for their personnel and dependents if such schools were specifically approved by the Bulgarian government. [] the Soviet Embassy was the only diplomatic mission which maintained such a school.

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Foreign language schools, [] included the following: the Russian-Bulgarian Gymnasium located on Ulitsa Stara Planina in Sofia, the foreign language gymnasium (specializing in English and French) located in a pension on Avenue Marshal Tolbukhin, the language gymnasium (primarily German) at Lovech, the language gymnasium (mostly French) at Plovdiv, and the language school at Ruse. [] it was practically impossible to enter these schools unless the person, or his family, was well placed in Bulgarian government or party circles.

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The Rate of Exchange, Electric Current, Water, etc.

[] the official rate of exchange for one U.S. dollar in Bulgaria as 7.8 leva plus an additional 40% which brings the total to 10.92 leva. [] in November 1958, the dollar exchange rate on the black market in Sofia was approximately 25 leva. [] illegal currency transactions were very dangerous because the Bulgarian regime viewed such activity as an anti-state crime in the same category as sabotage and espionage. The items which appeared most often in the black market included watches, nylon stockings, radios, coffee, etc.

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The electric current in the center of Sofia is 150 volts. The current in the suburbs and the surrounding villages is 220 volts. This higher voltage is also being introduced into all new buildings and housing developments being constructed throughout Bulgaria. [] within two or three years the electric current in all of Bulgaria will be a uniform 220 volts.

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[] the water in Sofia is exceptional. The supply, which originates in the neighboring mountains, is plentiful and very healthful. Gas is not used in Sofia for cooking. The cost of electricity per kilowatt hour for kitchen use is 0.20 leva; the cost of a kilowatt hour for lighting purposes is 0.10 leva.

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The Budget of the Average Bulgarian Family

In a speech at the end of 1953, Todor ZHIVKOV, the First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party, stated that the average monthly salary of a Bulgarian worker was 700 leva. 50X1-HUM

every worker knew that monthly salaries averaged only 550 to 600 leva.

the following information about the budget of an average Bulgarian family consisting of a man, woman, a son 10 years of age and a daughter six years of age. In this particular case only the father was working. All food consumed was prepared in the home. The quantities listed were allegedly the bare minimum for each commodity. The total daily calorie content per person for the food allocated on the given budget is roughly 2,000. It is generally agreed in dietetic circles that a person performing active work must consume at least 3,500 calories daily to maintain his health. 50X1-HUM

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount consumed by the family of four every 30 days</u>
Bread - 60 kilos @ 1.5 leva a kilo	90 leva
Meat - (2 times a week) 8 kilos @ 12 leva a kilo	96
Dry beans - (once a week) 4 kilos @ 5 leva a kilo	20
Sunflower seed oil - (once a week) 4 kilos @ 10 leva a kilo	40
Cooking fat - (twice a month) 2 kilos @ 12 leva a kilo	24
Butter - $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo a month @ 24 leva a kilo	12
Vegetables - 2 kilos a day @ 1.50 leva a kilo	90
Eggs - 2 a day	40
Vinegar - 1 liter @ 5 leva a liter	5
Salt - 1 kilo a month @ 1 leva a kilo	1
Sugar - 4 kilos @ 10 leva a kilo	40
Flour - 1 kilo @ 5 leva a kilo	5
Rice - $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilos @ 7 leva a kilo	11
Red pepper - $\frac{1}{4}$ kilo @ 16 leva a kilo	4
Lentils - 2 kilos @ 6 leva a kilo	12
Milk (sweet) $\frac{1}{2}$ liter a day @ 2.6 leva per liter	39
Yoghurt - 4 kilos @ 3.30 leva a kilo	13
Cheese - 4 kilos @ 12 leva a kilo	48
Marmalade - 1 kilo @ 7 leva a kilo	7
Fruit (in season) 10 kilos @ 2 leva a kilo	20
	617 leva

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In addition, the following monthly expenditures must also be included in this average Bulgarian family budget.

Rent - 1 room plus communal bath and kitchen	40 leva
Electricity	25
Water	5
Cigarettes - 1 pack a day - 30 @ 2 leva a pack	60
Soap	6
Public baths - 3 times a month	15
Family haircuts - once a month	12
1 newspaper a day	6
Trade union membership (1% of salary)	7
Membership in "Otechestven Front"	2
	<u>178 leva</u>

The following additional family and household expenditures must also be taken into consideration:

Shoes - 1 pair for each adult	
2 pairs for each of 2 children	
Total cost per year (6 pairs shoes)	400 leva
Shoe repair - twice a year per pair for adults	
several times for children	120
Socks - men 3 pairs, women 4 pairs, children 8 pairs	150
Underclothes - men 1 set, women 2 sets, children 6 sets	120
Wearing apparel - men - $\frac{1}{2}$ suit and $\frac{1}{5}$ of a coat a year	
women - 1 dress and $\frac{1}{5}$ of a coat	
a year	
children - 1 suit or 1 dress plus	
1 coat a year	1400
Schoolbooks	100
Fuel - 3 tons of coal at 112 leva a ton	
$\frac{1}{2}$ ton wood at 260 leva a ton	460
Tax on radio	40
	<u>2,790 leva</u>

(Monthly expenditure for the above stated items 23% leva.)

The total monthly expenditure for items included in these three categories is 1030 leva or 330 more than what Zhivkov boastfully cited as the monthly salary of the average Bulgarian worker. [redacted] the above items did not take into consideration such commodities as medicines,

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transportation, amusements (movies, theater, sporting events, etc.), vacations, entertaining friends and the like.

If a Bulgarian wife works, she receives between 400 and 500 leva a month. If there are children in the family and she works during the day, the youngsters must be placed in a nursery school which charges 10% per month of the total earnings of the parents. If the wife in the family described above were employed, the total family earnings would be 1200 leva. For two children the monthly charge at a children's school would be 240 leva. These schools only accept children between the ages of three and seven years. The hours at the school are between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Even with both parents working, therefore, it is practically impossible for a Bulgarian family to maintain the most basic living standards at current salary levels and prices for food and the added fixed expenditures (rent, light, heat, etc.).

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[redacted] one cannot help but notice signs of deprivation written on the gaunt and gray face of the average passerby on the streets of Sofia. A German journalist who had been stationed in Sofia immediately before World War II recently told [redacted] that, during a visit to Bulgaria in 1958, he found it extremely difficult to believe that this was the same race of people he had known in the 30's. As the journalist put it, "the gaiety was gone, people walked the streets without hope, without belief, without desire".

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In commenting on the sample budget [redacted] the Bulgarian chief-prosecutor could automatically arrest every person with a salary of less than 500 leva a month because, in order to survive in Bulgaria, one had to supplement such an income by some type of speculation, fraud, corruption, or black market activities. In like manner, anyone making less than a thousand leva a month could be booked "on suspicion" of participating in such schemes.

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Food Supplies

[redacted] supplies of feedstuffs in Sofia fluctuated greatly between seasons of the year. Various types of meat (usually veal and pork) were often unavailable for months. Most of the fish consumed in Bulgaria is imported by cold storage trucks from Greece and, therefore, its supply is unpredictable. Eggs and sugar are invariably in short supply. Although Bulgaria is often referred to as the vegetable garden of the Balkans, shortages in fresh produce occur from time to time even during the peak growing seasons. Long lines in front of food and dry-good stores are commonplace in the Sofia area.

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[redacted] there are many reasons for these food shortages. He placed primary blame on the prevailing policies governing planning, distribution and exports. Often food rots in one area while the same items cannot be obtained in neighboring localities. During the summer months collectives often hold back food supplies until better prices can be received so that a greater profit can be realized. The amount of produce exported to the Soviet Union is a well-guarded secret, but everyone feels it is substantial.

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[redacted] the special store for diplomatic missions located on Ulitsa Prof Asen Zlatarov is still operating. [redacted] the top party and government leaders always received their food supplies from such special sources. The central supply depot from which top grade produce is usually delivered to the privileged is located on Ulitsa Moskova in the building which previously was the power plant for the Royal Palace. Another "closed" shop for the exclusive use of party leaders is on the corner of Boulevard Marshal Tolbukhin and General Pavlov streets.

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50X1-HUM**Food Prices**

[redacted] the following prices [redacted] prevailed in Sofia during November 1958:

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Sofia-type
Debrudja-type
Bulgaria-type

Price per kilogram loaf

1.50 leva
2.60
3.50

Meat

Pork
Veal, first quality
Veal, second quality
Beef, first quality
Beef, second quality

Price per kilogram (2.2 lbs.)

12.00
14.80
13.20
13.00
12.60

Sausages

Type: People's
Paprika
Hamburg
Hunter's
Debrudin
Bacon
Berlin
Zagreb
Lukanka
Bulgaria

12.00
12.00
14.00
17.00
17.00
22.00
24.00
24.00
26.00
28.00

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<u>"Gastronom" (Delicatessen) Items</u>	<u>Price in levas per kilogram or per unit</u>
Sugar	9.80 leva
Macaroni	5.20
Rice	7.00
Salt	1.20
Red pepper (500 gr.)	14.00
Black pepper	250.00
Coffee	100.00
Line tea	60.00
Chocolate	70.00
Eggs (one)	.70
Butter	25.60
Cheese	12.00
Butter cheese	18.00
Oil	10.00 lt.
Olive oil	25.00 lt.
<u>Cigarettes and Spirits</u>	
Cigarettes, first quality	2.60 (a pack of 20)
Cigarettes, second quality	2.00 " " "
Cigarettes, third quality	1.60 " " "
Wine	8.00 lt.
Slivovits, plum brandy	40.00 lt.
Grape brandy	26.00 lt.
Fruit brandy	22.00 lt.
<u>Fruits and Vegetables in Season</u>	
<u>Fruits</u>	
Apples	3.00 leva
Pears	3.60
Grapes	2.00
Peaches	3.80

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<u>Fruits and Vegetables in Season</u>	<u>Price per kilogram</u>
<u>Vegetables</u>	
Potatoes	1.00 leva
Cabbages	1.00
Tomatoes	2.00
Carrots	1.50
Beans	5.00
Onions	1.50
Peas	2.00
<u>Canned Foods (900 gram containers)</u>	
Cherries	2.60
Pears	2.60
Apples	2.20
Peaches	3.00
Quinces	2.50
Grapes	3.00
<u>Jam (1 kilo containers)</u>	
Strawberry	15.00
Apple	12.00
Plum	11.00
Mixed	10.00
Dog rose	11.00
Dog rose and apple	11.00
<u>Canned Vegetables (900 gram containers)</u>	
Green beans	3.50
Tomatoes	3.50
Peas	4.00
Gyuvetch (mixed vegetables)	3.50
<u>Consumer Goods Prices</u>	

the following examples of consumer goods prices
in November 1958:

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<u>Men's Clothing, ready made</u>	<u>Price per unit</u>
One suit (lowest quality)	450.00 to 600.00 leva
(medium quality)	620.00 800.00
(best quality)	820.00 950.00
<u>Shoes</u>	
with rubber soles	60.00 to 105.00
with leather soles	150.00
with better quality leather soles	240.00
<u>Spoke</u>	
Cotton	4.00 to 9.00
Wool	12.00 16.00
Nylon	18.00 23.00
<u>Shirts</u>	
Zephyr and oxford (type of material)	40.00
Poplin	70.00
Silk	80.00 to 120.00
<u>Underwear</u>	
One set of cotton winter underwear	18.00 to 35.00
One set of cotton summer underwear	12.00 20.00
<u>Caps</u>	
Domestic manufacture	20.00 to 40.00
Barot	45.00
<u>Hats</u>	
Czechoslovak trade mark "Bical and Topak"	163.00
French manufacture	150.00
<u>Coats</u>	
Raincoat (similar to Mackintosh)	400.00
Loden (sort of light coat)	300.00
Warm winter coat	600.00 to 1,100.00

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Suit MaterialImported Cloth

Streigarn (type)

Price per meter

146.00 leva

Cheviot

270.00

Camgarn

306.00

Mixed

270.00

"Kasha"

250.00

Domestic ClothPrice per meter

Streigarn

73.00 leva

Cheviot

87.00

Camgarn

93.00

Women's Clothing, ready madePrice per unit

Wool suit (imported)

600.00 leva

Wool suit (domestic wool)

350.00

Zelwolle suit (artificial material)

200.00

Wool dress (imported wool material)

300.00

Wool dress (domestic wool material)

140.00

Zelwolle dress

70.00 to 90.00

Wool skirt (imported wool)

250.00

Wool skirt (domestic wool)

120.00

Zelwolle skirt (artificial material)

60.00

Blouse (poplin)

60.00

Blouse (silk)

100.00

Shoes, rubber soles

70.00 to 120.00

Shoes, leather soles

140.00 280.00

Stockings, cotton

18.00 26.00

Stockings, silk

30.00

Stockings, nylon

36.00 60.00

Underwear

one set of cotton winter underwear

14.00 35.00

one set of cotton summer underwear

12.00 30.00

one set of nylon underwear

100.00

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Women's Clothing, ready made

	<u>Price per unit</u>
Raincoat	300.00 to 600.00 leva
Loden (sort of lightweight coat)	200.00 400.00
Winter coat	500.00 900.00

Beauty and Toilet Articles

Eau-de-Cologne, 1 lt.	400.00 leva
Lipstick (domestic)	1.00 to 2.00
Lipstick (imported)	40.00
Fingernail polish (domestic)	3.00
Fingernail polish (imported)	32.00
Shaving soap (piece)	1.50
Toilet soap (bar)	2.00
One shaving blade	.80

Furniture

Complete bedroom set (veneer)	3,600.00 to 7,000.00 leva
Complete dining room set (veneer)	2,800.00 to 5,000.00
Easy chair	400.00 600.00
Table (veneer)	400.00 500.00
Couch	600.00
Kitchen table	120.00
Kitchen buffet	280.00 600.00
Tapestry chair	140.00
Kitchen chair	10.00 40.00
Rug, ordinary (2.60 x 3.20 meters, made of reclaimed material)	400.00
Rug, oriental type (2.60 x 3.20 meters)	5,000.00
Radio, "Orpheus" (domestic)	1,200.00
"Balkan" (domestic with record player)	1,800.00
"Tesla" (with record player)	2,100.00
"Orion" (Hungarian)	2,200.00
"Olympia" (GDR)	2,100.00
"Pioneer" (small domestic)	750.00
"Tesla" (small)	400.00

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Vehicles

	<u>Price per unit</u>
Bicycle, trademark "Mifa" (GDR)	1,200.00 leva
"Balkan" (domestic)	900.00
Motorcycle "K 55" 150-250 ccm (Soviet)	4,500.00
"Gawa" 150-250 ccm (Czech)	5,200.00
"Gawa" 150 ccm	7,300.00
"Gawa" 250 ccm	8,400.00
Passenger cars, "Moskvich" (Soviet 4 cylinder, 4 seat)	23,000.00
"Pobeda" (Soviet)	28,000.00
"Volga" (Soviet)	47,000.00

Office Equipment

Typewriter, portable, "Erika" (GDR)	1,800.00
Typewriter, portable, "Continental" (GDR)	2,000.00
Office typewriter (GDR)	2,800.00

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The November 1958 Price Reductions

[redacted] price reductions [redacted] occurred in Bulgaria during November 1958; [redacted] practically all items reduced in price were black market commodities. [redacted]

[redacted] This reduction would allegedly stimulate trade in these commodities and cut down on their illegal importation into the country by visitors and Bulgarians returning from trips abroad. [redacted] that the customs official's reports played an important [redacted]

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[redacted] the price reductions meant little to the average Bulgarian since the "reduced prices" covered items which in many cases could only be purchased with an outlay of two-months salary. [redacted]

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[redacted] In the recent so-called price reductions, the regime lowered the quality of the merchandise and changed names of certain items to avoid continued sale at reduced prices. The [redacted]

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[] this particularly applied to textiles.

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Services to Diplomatic Corps in Sofia

In keeping with the general practice in communist-controlled countries, foreign diplomatic missions in Bulgaria must rely on the services of a special section within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for aid in handling administrative matters such as procurement of housing, the employment of Bulgarian office and household employees, and the acquisition of certain supplies.

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[] the Ministry of Foreign Affairs receives special allocations of housing units for foreign diplomatic personnel from the Zhilfond, (Sofia's housing authority). [] for the average Bulgarian, the housing situation in Sofia is deplorable; however, if it is in the regime's interest for a foreign embassy or legation to have a certain number of first-class apartments, such units can be made available immediately.

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[] in the years immediately following World War II, many persons who owned and occupied the more desirable houses and apartments in Sofia were forced to leave the city for one reason or another (arrests, deportations, migrations, etc.). These dwellings were confiscated by Zhilfond, which assigned them to high-ranking party, government, and military officials. The residents of these apartments, therefore, have no inherent rights to such quarters, and only continue to occupy them until the regime finds it advantageous to turn them over to more important tenants.

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[] commenting on the relationship between the regime and the Western diplomatic corps in Sofia, [] every Bulgarian national who works for a Western diplomatic mission must also report periodically to the secret police on various aspects of his work. He did not personally know anyone who held such a position but he was certain that this activity was as well-known as the fact that all Western diplomats are constantly followed.

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[] he would not consider talking with a British, French or American diplomat on the streets of Sofia because he knew they were watched at every step.

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Conclusions

In summing up current living conditions in Bulgaria [] the living standards of the privileged classes tended to gravitate towards more luxury, whereas that of the ordinary worker or peasant became worse. He believes

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that Bulgaria is not basically a poor country. It has good agricultural potential and mineral, oil, and ore deposits are being discovered in ever-increasing amounts. The people are aware, however, that the wealth of the country is being exported, primarily to the Soviet Union, at practically giveaway prices. The Bulgarian government keeps extolling the benefits of trade with the Soviet Union, but the people know that this exchange is more of a one-way street in which compensation for Bulgarian uranium, zinc, pitchblende, tobacco, wine, fruits and vegetables is in the form of "inefficient" machinery. [redacted] by way of example [redacted] in 1956, [redacted] the Georgi Dimitrov Metallurgical Factory, which the Soviets had built [redacted] was [redacted] obvious poor quality [redacted] equipment. In like manner, Soviet trucks sent to Bulgaria usually cost twice as much to operate and take twice as long to repair as Czechoslovak trucks. [redacted] in reality, Bulgaria sends the Soviet Union much more than she receives.

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[redacted] so much of Soviet resources had to go to help China, Albania, Rumania and Hungary that their own standards could not be raised.

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[redacted] the re-establishing of diplomatic relations between the United States and Bulgaria came as a surprise to the average Bulgarian. The possibility of such a rapprochement had been often rumored in the past and seemed somewhat inevitable because relations were maintained with other NATO countries such as England, France, and Italy. [redacted] the only Bulgarians who would be allowed to associate with American diplomatic personnel would be those who were so instructed. He added, however, that the United States should not interpret such lack of association as hostility. It should be viewed as a manifestation of the fact that the Bulgarian people cannot act or think in a natural manner. Vigilance campaigns have shown Bulgarians that it is impolitic to be friendly with or show admiration for those in the enemy camp. [redacted] the day-to-day plight of the Bulgarian is difficult enough under the best of circumstances without his committing the heresy of deviating from communist thought-control.

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[redacted] the Bulgarians referred to as lethargic and apathetic, particularly at the time of the Hungarian Revolution. [redacted] life has little meaning when a person has to work to the limits of his endurance so that he can earn only enough to live in crowded quarters, and eat poor food.

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